

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 NSC-05 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 /054 W

-----312100Z 076242 /66

R 310258Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2998

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0958

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, UK, KS

SUBJ: CALL ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG BY DR. KIM KWAN SUK,
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA MARCH 29, 1977

1. DR. KIM KWAN SUK, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIRSTIAN CHURCHES OF THE ROK, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SYNGMAN RHEE, STAFF OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE USA, AND THE REV. ED LIENDENS, ASIA DESK OF THE DIVISION OF OVERSEAS MINISTRIES, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, NYC, CALLED BRIEFLY ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG MARCH 28. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE GROUP APPEARED TO BE TO URGE THE USG TO GIVE MORE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO THOSE GROUPS IN KOREA WHICH ARE PROTESTING CURTAILMENT OF CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE ROK. AMBASSADOR YOUNG OFFERED TO HELP THEM SEE PRESIDENT CARTER BY CALLING THE PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT SECRETARY.

2. BEFORE MEETING AMBASSADOR YOUNG, GROUP TALKED WITH MISOFFS. THEY SAID CHURCH WAS FREE TO PRACTICE RELIGION IN KOREA AS LONG AS CHURCH DID NOT ASSUME ROLE OF ADVOCATE OF CIVIL, POLITICAL, OR ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF OTHER GROUPS SUCH AS WORKERS, STUDENTS, AND SCHOLARS. THEY
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ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MANY CHRISTIAN LEADERS--
CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT--SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT,
BUT AFFIRMED THAT MAJOR CENTERS OF CRITICISM TO
GOVERNMENT BY REPRESSIVE DECREE WERE IN THE CHURCHES.
IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, THEY SAID THAT JAPAN'S GOVERN-
MENT HAS EXPRESSED NO EVIDENT INTEREST IN SUPPORTING
HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA.

3. KIM SAID THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE ROK HAD RESULTED IN A WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR AND THAT STANDARD OF LIFE WAS NOT IMPROVING FOR BULK OF POPULATION.

4. IN CONNECTION WITH KIM'S INTEREST IN HAVING THE USG GIVE MORE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTORS IN THE ROK, MISOFFS RECALLED WHITE HOUSE PRESS RELEASE ISSUED FOLLOWING MARCH 9 MEETING OF ROK FOREIGN MINISTER PARK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, WHICH SAID IN PART: "... THE PRESIDENT ALSO EMPHASIZED TO PARK OUR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA AND ELSEWHERE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD..."

5. KIM SAID HE WOULD BE IN THE USA THE REST OF THE WEEK AND WAS GOING TO WASHINGTON, D.C., WHERE HIS CONTACT WOULD BE MR. JIM HAMILTON, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (TELEPHONE 544-2350). IN NEW YORK HIS CONTACT IS REV. LIEUDENS (TELEPHONE 212-870-2371).
YOUNG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977USUNN00958
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770111-0425
Format: TEL
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977031/aaaaaaj.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b18607ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2931454
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG BY DR. KIM KWAN SUK, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA MARCH 29, 1977
TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, UK, KS, (YOUNG, ANDREW), (KIM KWAN SUK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b18607ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009